

## Tips for Container-Style Worm Farms



A worm farm that has a bottom is a container-style worm farm. Containers are portable and can be run indoors or outside – perfect for the garage or balcony. Containers can also catch the liquids given off from food & worms. Larger containers can be made using bathtubs!

Container-style worm farms can be just a single container or several trays stacked up, with holes in the floors to drain liquids and allow the worms free movement between trays.

Some container-style worm farms drain liquids into a catchment box or bucket - and a tap makes for easy removal. Bathtubs can drip juice directly into a bucket, ideally filtering it through a stocking or bag of pumice at the drainhole. Most commercial container worm farms are made of plastic.

These enclosed worm farms can be a bit tricky to manage, mostly because the worm bed is not touching soil and the bedding tends to become more moist. The ecosystem inside can take longer to develop and you need to move trays around to make room for more food scraps. Castings can be harvested regularly and the trays can be rotated to make room for more waste in the top feeding tray.

### Here are some tips and tricks to using a container-style worm farm:

1. Stir up the bed regularly (the worms can handle the disruption) to add air pockets.
2. Rotate feeding sites. Try burying food waste into a different corner each time. Don't lay food onto food - choose an empty patch of 'black stuff' each time.
3. Add garden lime regularly - about a teaspoon per feed. Use calcium carbonate (ordinary garden lime) NOT dolomite or builder's lime.
4. Pre-rot food (cut it up, lime it, blanch it, soak it) before feeding it to the worms.
5. Feed them NO meat, no citrus peels, nothing that's been baked, nothing too spicy or oily. All fruit is okay but do lime regularly. Coffee grounds are fantastic additions - just not too much in one go!
6. Feed little and often - don't wait for the old stuff to disappear. Increase the amount as your worm colony grows in numbers and the bacteria becomes more established.
7. In a stacked system, having more than one tray is easier because it gives you more room to add food scraps and allowing older trays more time to properly decompose. This makes harvesting the vermicast much easier because the worms have moved on.
8. Remember, worms get all the credit, but it's the bacteria doing the work ... and then the worms eat the bacteria. Container-style worm farms don't get bacteria unless it's added. Do this by adding a handful of healthy soil or compost or active vermicast. Cold temps slow down the bacterial development so your worm farm will slow down in winter.
9. In winter place your worm farm where it can get some morning sun and where it's out of the wind. Move it indoors if you want to speed things up.
10. Drainage is important. If the bedding seems overly wet it may smell. This indicates pockets with no air & poor drainage. To fix this : add garden lime and strips of dry newspaper and then give the mass a stir (adds pockets of air).
11. Spread a piece of carpet or cardboard on top of the worm colony to block out light, cover the food to keep out fruit flies, and give the worms some safe places to lay their eggs.

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